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EXAMINER

JOHNSON, GREGORY L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3691

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/730,228	Applicant(s) AKIALIS ET AL.	
	Examiner GREGORY JOHNSON	Art Unit 3691	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 September 2010.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This communication is in response to the amendment filed September 27, 2010.

Status of Claims

2. Claims 1, 4, 7-9, 13-16, 18-20, 22, 26-28 and 30 are amended. Claims 2-3, 5-6, 10-12, 17, 21, 23-25 and 29 are as previously presented. Claims 1-30 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-12 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In view of the amendments to claim 1, the rejections are withdrawn.

5. Claims 13-17 and 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 13, the phrase "wherein the electronic notification sent to the customer bypasses the at least one computer" fails to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as his invention because it is unclear as to how the electronic notification can bypass the one computer when the authorization system only contains the one computer.

The first limitation of claim 13 recites:

- receiving, at an authorization system that includes at least one computer, information entered by a consumer and sent by a biller through a network

In view of the “at least one”, the authorization system has been broadly interpreted as having only the “one computer”. Therefore, the interpretation would read:

- receiving, at an authorization system that includes one computer, information entered by a consumer and sent by a biller through a network

The last limitation of claim 13 recites:

- sending, from the authorization system, an electronic notification to the consumer that the payment has been authorized, wherein the electronic notification is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format specified by the biller, wherein the electronic notification sent to the consumer bypasses the at least one computer.

If the authorization system includes only one computer, it is unclear how an electronic notification can be sent from the authorization system to the customer that bypasses said computer. For examination purposes, the last limitation has been interpreted as reciting:

- sending, from the authorization system, an electronic notification to the consumer that the payment has been authorized, wherein the electronic notification is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a

predefined format specified by the biller, wherein the electronic notification sent to the consumer is sent by the one computer.

Claims 14-16 recite limitations that are substantially equivalent to the first and last limitations of claim 13, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds.

Claims 26, 27, 28 and (17 & 29) depend from claim 13, 14, 15 or 16, respectively, and are therefore rejected based on their dependency.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

8. **Claims 1-4 and 12-17** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez et al., Pub. No. 2002/0194138 (hereinafter "Dominguez"),

in view of Putta et al., Pub. No. 2001/0032192 (hereinafter "Putta") and Kolling et al., Pat. No. 5,963,925 (hereinafter "Kolling").

As to claim 1, Dominguez discloses a method of authorizing one or more bill payments, the method comprising:

- receiving, at an authorization system (e.g. issuer financial institution) that includes at least one computer, information entered by a consumer and sent by a biller through a network (§0059-0060, §0067-0068 and Figs. 1 and 4; discusses and illustrates a cardholder, a transaction, a merchant and a process for authorizing the transaction), wherein the information identifies:
 - the consumer (§0050; via cardholder name),
 - an amount to be paid (§0066; via payment amount),
 - an account to be used to make a payment by the consumer to the biller for a bill provided by the biller to the consumer (§0033, §0059-0060, §0066-0067 and §0072; which teaches a cardholder shopping online, adding items to a shopping cart, proceeding to the online merchant's checkout page, and completes the online merchants checkout forms, and then clicks on a "buy" button [this implicitly teaches the cardholder is presented with an itemized bill/invoice]; in addition to teaching using the account associate with the card);
- determining whether the payment should be authorized (§0068; via the issuer financial institution will either authorize or decline the transaction);

- transmitting, by the at least one computer, through the network to a website of the biller, authorization information including whether to authorize the payment or refuse authorization of the payment (¶0068; via the issuer then returns the authorization response via the payment network to the merchant).

Dominguez does not disclose the following element:

- sending, from the authorization system, an electronic notification directly to the consumer that the payment has been authorized, in response to determining that the payment has been authorized.

However, Putta teaches a system and method for facilitating access to financial instruments such as credit and debit card accounts, checking accounts, bank accounts and the like. Putta teaches the use of an authorization module that receives payment requests for authorization from merchants, based on a customer deciding to make a payment. Putta also teaches that if the customer's preferences (i.e. user-modifiable preference conditions for their account) indicated that the customer should be notified upon a successful authorization, the customer is notified through notification interface 400 (e.g. to web browsers and wireless devices). [See ¶0022, ¶0049, ¶0054-0061, ¶0095 and Figs. 1-2 and 6].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Putta within Dominguez for the motivation to provide flexible methods of processing transactions

and payments based on existing credit card processing infrastructure while requiring minimal changes (§0021).

Additional, Dominguez teaches systems and methods for authenticating the identity of account holders during online transactions, in which, an authentication service allows a card issuer to verify a cardholder's identity using a variety of authentication methods, such as the use of passwords (Abstract and §0002). And Putta teaches methods and apparatus for processing transactions of financial instruments such as credit cards, and more specifically for improving the security, flexibility and privacy of such transactions (§0002).

Therefore, it also would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include in the online account authentication service as taught by Dominguez, the notification methods as taught by Putta, since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (A).

Neither Dominguez nor Putta discloses or teaches the following elements (as interpreted, the elements are directed to formatting of an electronic message):

- wherein the authorization information is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format specified by the biller (e.g. logos, font characteristics, etc); and

- wherein the electronic notification is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format (e.g. logos, font characteristics, etc) specified by the biller.

However, Kolling teaches an electronic statement presentment (ESP) system that replaces the preparation and mailing of paper statements and invoices from a biller with electronic delivery. Electronic statements have the same look as paper statements as well as including video, audio, graphics, and custom enclosures. Kolling teaches the use of templates in generating an electronic statement containing any information, format or logo that the biller desires to send to the consumer. This allows a biller to continue using a similar format and style such as is presented on paper statements to maintain the same "look and feel" for the consumer (Abstract; col.4, lines 15-29; col.6, lines 1-24; col.16, line 45 thru col.17, line 67; and col. 19, lines 7-13).

Dominguez teaches a method that includes transmitting authorization information and Putta teaches methods for transmitting notifications. Both types of communication (i.e. authorization or notification) would require electronic messages to be formatted based on some pre-defined scheme. Kolling teaches a method in which an electronic message can be formatted based upon a format desired by the biller.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use templates for customizing the format of electronic messages based on a biller's pre-defined scheme as taught by Kolling, since the claimed invention is simply a substitution of one known element for another (i.e. formatting a notification and/or an authorization vs. formatting a statement), and one of

ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the substitution would be predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (B).

In addition, the known work in the field of bill distribution/payments (e.g. customized formats for electronic documents/messages to maintain a “look and feel” of a biller’s non-electronic messages) could have prompted variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces, and the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2143, Rational (F).

As to claim 2, neither Dominguez nor Putta discloses or teaches the following limitations; however Kolling teaches the limitations:

- storing format information for each of a plurality of billers (Abstract and claim 54; via template library serves as a central repository of templates for said plurality of billers); and
- retrieving format information for a biller to whom the authorization information is sent (Abstract and claim 54; via transmitting said template from said template library to said generation workstation).

In regards to “formatting the electronic notification based on the retrieved format information”, Putta teaches a Programmable Payment network can send information regarding recent authorizations or violations made on the customer's accounts, to the customer. A customer can thus get feedback about his charges, *without waiting for the monthly statement* or explicitly trying to get his information. This notification can be communicated to the customer via a communication media such as electronic mail

(¶0123). And Kolling teaches using templates to generate (i.e. format) *electronic statements* (Abstract and claim 54).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use templates for customizing the format of electronic messages sent to a consumer as taught by Kolling, since the claimed invention is simply a substitution of one known element for another (i.e. formatting a statement vs. formatting a notification), and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the substitution would be predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (B).

In addition, the known work in the field of bill distribution/payments (e.g. customized formats for electronic documents/messages) could have prompted variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces, and the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2143, Rational (F).

As to claim 3, Dominguez does not disclose the following limitation; however Putta teaches the limitation:

- wherein the received information includes an e-mail address for the consumer, and wherein sending the electronic notification includes sending the electronic notification in the form of an e-mail directly to the consumer through the network (¶0123; via notification can be communicated to the customer via a communication media such as electronic mail).

Refer to the motivation, as recited in the rejection of claim 1 above, for the rationale to include the teachings of Putta within Dominguez.

As to claim 4, Dominguez discloses the following limitations;

- wherein determining whether the payment should be authorized includes at least one of determining whether the payment will exceed a credit limit of the consumer's credit card, determining whether the payment will exceed a credit limit of the consumer's debit card, or validating the consumer's bank account (¶0050 and ¶0053; via cardholder authentication information includes information such as card account number and account balance; and verify the card account status).

As to claim 12, Dominguez discloses the following limitation:

- receiving, from the biller, a plurality of accumulated payments to be authorized in a batch by means of a function call (e.g. authorization messages can be batched and sent in a group at a later time; ¶0068).

As to claim 13, Dominguez discloses a method of authorizing one or more bill payments, the method comprising:

- a credit card number or a debit card number (¶0066; via card account number),
- a verification code for the credit card number or the debit card number (¶0053 and ¶0068; via cardholder verification value 2 (CVV2)); and
- determining whether the payment should be authorized based at least in part on whether the verification code is correct (¶0053 and ¶0068; which

discusses verifying the Cardholder Verification Value 2 (CVV2) and the issuer financial institution will either authorize or decline the transaction).

The remaining elements of claim 13 are equivalent to the elements of claim 1; see the rejections of claim 1 above.

As to claim 14, Dominguez discloses a method of authorizing one or more bill payments, the method comprising:

- editing the information sent by the biller (e.g. checking incoming data for various parameters) and returning edit failure information to the biller if editing fails (§0068; via the issuer financial institution processing of the authorization transaction and the *use of a flag indicating if the cardholder was successfully authenticated*, account information, digital signatures, a cardholder verification value 2, card authentication verification value (CAVV), an offline PIN authenticated by chip card EMV cryptogram, and the necessary fields to provide the merchant with guaranteed payment); and
- if the editing does not fail, determining whether the payment should be authorized at least partially based on whether the verification code is correct (§0068; via the issuer financial institution will either authorize or decline the transaction).

Dominguez does not explicitly disclose “returning edit failure information to the consumer if editing fails.”

However, Putta teaches a system and method for facilitating access to financial instruments such as credit and debit card accounts, checking accounts, bank accounts and the like. Putta teaches the use of an authorization module that performs various checks to determine whether or not the authorization request should be rejected. Putta teaches that if any of the checks fail, the authorization request is rejected. The rejection is sent back to the merchant bank. In addition, based on customer's preferences, a customer may be notified of the rejection and the reason for it (§0088-0096).

Refer to the motivation, as recited in the rejection of claim 1 above, for the rationale to include the teachings of Putta within Dominguez.

The remaining elements of claim 14 are equivalent to the elements of claims 1 and 13; see the rejections of claims 1 and 13 above.

As to claim 15, Dominguez discloses a method of authorizing one or more bill payments (Abstract); Dominguez does not disclose the following limitations; however Kolling teaches the limitations:

- storing, in connection with the authorization system, format information for each of a plurality of billers (Abstract and claim 54; via template library serves as a central repository of templates for said plurality of billers); and
- retrieving particular format information for the biller to whom the authorization information is sent (Abstract and claim 54; via transmitting said template from said template library to said generation workstation).

In regards to “formatting, according to the particular format, the electronic notification in the format of the biller to whom the authorization information is sent”,

Putta teaches a Programmable Payment network can send information regarding recent authorizations or violations made on the customer's accounts, to the customer. A customer can thus get feedback about his charges, *without waiting for the monthly statement* or explicitly trying to get his information. This notification can be communicated to the customer via a communication media such as electronic mail.

And Kolling teaches using templates to generate (i.e. format) electronic statements (i.e. messages) containing any information, format or logo that the biller desires to send to the consumer. This allows a biller to continue using a similar format and style such as is presented on paper statements to maintain the same "look and feel" for the consumer (Abstract; col.4, lines 15-29; col.6, lines 1-24; co1.16, line 45 thru co1.17, line 67; and col. 19, lines 7-13).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use templates for customizing the format of electronic messages sent to a consumer as taught by Kolling, since the claimed invention is simply a substitution of one known element for another (i.e. formatting a statement vs. formatting a notification), and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the substitution would be predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (B).

In addition, the known work in the field of bill distribution/payments (e.g. customized formats for electronic documents/messages) could have prompted variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces, and the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2143, Rational (F).

The remaining elements of claim 15 are equivalent to the elements of claims 1 and 13; see the rejections of claims 1 and 13 above.

As to claim 16, Dominguez discloses a method of authorizing one or more bill payments, the method comprising:

- assigning an identification number for each transaction for a given the biller (¶0068 and ¶0103; via the payment response message contains a card authorization verification value (CAVV), to inform the merchant that the cardholder has been authenticated); and
- transmitting the identification number to the biller (¶0103).

The remaining elements of claim 16 are equivalent to the elements of claims 1, 13, 14 and 15; see the rejections of claims 1, 13, 14 and 15 above.

As to claim 17, Dominguez discloses the following limitation:

- assigning an identification number for each transaction for each biller of a plurality of billers (0068 and ¶0103; the payment response message contains a card authorization verification value (CAVV), to inform the merchant that the cardholder has been authenticated);
- storing the identification numbers (¶0009, ¶0041, ¶0066 and ¶0103; via storing signed which contain information that verifies which transactions were authenticated and provides additional information during dispute resolution processes); and
- transmitting the identification numbers associated with a given one of the billers to the biller in a report of transactions associated with the biller

during a specified period of time (§0103 and §0244-0245; via billing reports).

9. Claims 5-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, Putta and Kolling as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Ensel et al., Pat. No. 6,493,685 (hereinafter “Ensel”).

As to claim 5, neither Dominguez, Putta nor Kolling discloses or teaches the following limitations:

- wherein determining whether the payment should be authorized includes, in a request for payment from a bank account:
- communicating authorization;
- submitting the transaction for bank clearance after authorization;
- and communicating clearance failure to the biller if and when clearance failure is received.

However, Ensel teaches that in a method for an electronic account presentation and response system there is a process for accepting a payment from a bank account. Ensel teaches that the system generates an ACH debit to the customer to debit the account identified by the customer, and also credits the biller in the amount debited from the customer. If later the ACH does not clear, after two attempts, the system will debit the account of the biller. At this time, it is the responsibility of the biller to start a collection process against the customer (column 17, line 41 thru column 18, line 18).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Ensel within the combination of Dominguez, Putta and Kolling for the motivation to provide a method that ensures privacy and security for billing and payment information for use in biller's systems and operations environments (col. 3, line 20-39).

As to claim 6, Dominguez discloses the following limitation:

- accumulating a plurality of payment requests over a period of time; and submitting the accumulated plurality of payment requests for clearance in a batch (e.g. authorization messages can be batched and sent in a group at a later time; ¶0068).

10. Claims 7-8, 10 and 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, Putta and Kolling as applied to claims 1 and 13-16 above, and further in view of Byrne et al., Pub. No. 2003/0229590 (hereinafter "Byrne").

As to claims 7-8, 10 and 26-29, neither Dominguez, Putta nor Kolling discloses or teaches the following limitations; however, Byrne teaches the limitations:

- pre-authorizing a given consumer and a given credit card or debit card based on cardholder information; and sending pre-authorization information to the biller prior to receipt of a specific request for authorization of a specific payment charged to said credit card or debit card from the given consumer to allow the biller to determine the validity of the credit card or debit card prior to proceeding with a transaction (¶0045);

- reversing a payment authorization at a request of the biller, wherein the request of the biller is provided prior to an end of a business day, and wherein the payment authorization was given during the same business day; and notifying at least one bank or credit card organization to whom the payment authorization was communicated (e.g. credit or void; ¶0041-0042 and ¶0105);
- receiving from the biller at least one of restrict or unrestrict instructions for an account of one or more customers; storing the instructions in association with the authorization system; and retrieving and implementing the instructions upon receipt of a payment request for the account of the one or more customers (e.g., reject orders from certain e-mail accounts or credit cards; ¶0149); and

Claim 26:

- first pre-authorizing a given customer and a given credit card or debit card based on cardholder information (¶0045); and sending information of the pre-authorization to the biller prior to receipt of a specific request for authorization of a specific payment charged to the given credit card or the debit card so as to allow the biller to determine a validity of the given credit card or the debit card prior to proceeding with a transaction (¶0045).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Byrne within Dominguez for the motivation to provide a payment platform that can incorporate new

technologies to provide a secure, reliable and flexible payment transaction processing solution for financial organizations and the sellers that they serve to reduce risk and improve profitability for those financial organizations that adopt it (§0009).

The limitations of claims 27-29 are substantially equivalent to the limitations of claim 26, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds.

11. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, Putta and Kolling as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Byrne and Jamison et al., Pub. No. 2003/0191711 (hereinafter “Jamison”).

As to claim 9, neither Dominguez, Putta nor Kolling discloses or teaches the following limitations; however Byrne teaches the following limitations:

- storing, at said authorization system, basic billing information for each of a plurality of customers of the biller (e.g. customer’s credit card information is stored at the integrated payment system 50; §0028 and §0045);
- providing the biller with access to the billing information for each of the customers (§0045); and
- allowing the biller to modify the accessed billing information directly (§0045).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant’s invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Byrne within Dominguez for the motivation to provide a payment platform that can incorporate new technologies to provide a secure, reliable and flexible payment transaction processing

solution for financial organizations and the sellers that they serve to reduce risk and improve profitability for those financial organizations that adopt it (¶0009).

Neither Dominguez, Putta, Kolling nor Byrne discloses or teaches the following limitation; however Jamison teaches the limitation:

- giving a customer access to customer's associated billing information (e.g. customer can modify the information contained in the payment account; ¶0212).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Jamison within the Dominguez and Bryne combination for the motivation to provide a technique for paying bills to any biller website that permits online payment of a bill by an electronic bill presentment and payment ("EBPP") systems (¶0003 and ¶0025).

12. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, Putta and Kolling as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Crea et al., Pub. No. 2004/0210521 (hereinafter "Crea").

As to claim 11, neither Dominguez, Putta nor Kolling discloses or teachings the following limitation; however, Crea teaches the limitation:

- providing a preliminary calculation of fees to the consumer in response to supplying the amount and a means of payment (e.g. transaction fee) (¶0021 and ¶0035; which discusses a transaction processor charging a to

a consumer and a payment confirmation screen displaying fees that may be charged).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Crea within the combination of Dominguez, Putta and Kolling for the motivation to provide an additional element used in processing of payments from a consumer to a payee (§0002 and §0004).

13. Claims 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, in view of Putta, Kolling and Mersky et al., Pat. No. 6,119,106 (hereinafter "Mersky").

As to claim 18, Dominguez discloses a method of authorizing one or more bill payments, the method comprising:

- receiving, at an authorization system that includes at least one computer, information entered by a consumer and sent by a biller through the worldwide web (§0059-0060, §0067-0068 and Figs. 1 and 4; discusses and illustrates a cardholder, a transaction, a merchant and a process for authorizing the transaction), wherein the information identifies:
 - a payor (§0050; via cardholder name),
 - an amount to be paid (§0066; via payment amount),
 - an account to be used to make a payment by the payor to the biller for a bill provided by the biller to the payor (§0033, §0059-0060, §0066-0067

and ¶0072; which teaches a cardholder shopping online, adding items to a shopping cart, proceeding to the online merchant's checkout page, and completes the online merchants checkout forms, and then clicks on a "buy" button [this implicitly teaches the cardholder is presented with an itemized bill/invoice]; in addition to teaching using the account associate with the card);

- determining whether the payment should be authorized (¶0068; via the issuer financial institution will either authorize or decline the transaction); and
- transmitting, by the at least one computer, through the worldwide web to a website of the biller, authorization information including whether to authorize the payment or refuse authorization of the payment (¶0068; via the issuer then returns the authorization response via the payment network to the merchant).

Dominguez does not disclose the following element:

- sending, from the authorization system, an electronic notification to the payor that the payment has been authorized.

However, Putta teaches a system and method for facilitating access to financial instruments such as credit and debit card accounts, checking accounts, bank accounts and the like. Putta teaches the use of an authorization module that receives payment requests for authorization from merchants, based on a customer deciding to make a payment. Putta also teaches that if customer preferences (i.e. user-modifiable

preference conditions for their account) indicated that the customer should be notified upon a successful authorization, the customer is notified through notification interface 400 (e.g. to web browsers and wireless devices). [See ¶0022, ¶0049, ¶0054-0061, ¶0095 and Figs. 1-2 and 6].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Putta within Dominguez for the motivation to provide flexible methods of processing transactions and payments based on existing credit card processing infrastructure while requiring minimal changes (¶0021).

Neither Dominguez nor Putta discloses or teaches the following elements:

- wherein the authorization information is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format (e.g. logos, font characteristics, etc) specified by the biller; and
- wherein the electronic notification is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format (e.g. logos, font characteristics, etc) specified by the biller.

However, Kolling teaches an electronic statement presentment (ESP) system that replaces the preparation and mailing of paper statements and invoices from a biller with electronic delivery. Electronic statements have the same look as paper statements as well as including video, audio, graphics, and custom enclosures. Kolling teaches the use of templates in generating an electronic statement containing any information, format or logo that the biller desires to send to the consumer. This allows a biller to

continue using a similar format and style such as is presented on paper statements to maintain the same "look and feel" for the consumer (Abstract; col.4, lines 15-29; col.6, lines 1-24; col.16, line 45 thru col.17, line 67; and col. 19, lines 7-13).

Dominguez teaches a method that includes transmitting authorization information and Putta teaches methods for transmitting notifications. Both types of communication (i.e. authorization or notification) would require electronic messages to be formatted based on some pre-defined scheme. Kolling teaches a method in which an electronic message can be formatted based upon a format desired by the biller.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use templates for customizing the format of electronic messages based on a biller's pre-defined scheme as taught by Kolling, since the claimed invention is simply a substitution of one known element for another (i.e. formatting a notification and/or an authorization vs. formatting a statement), and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the substitution would be predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (B).

In addition, the known work in the field of bill distribution/payments (e.g. customized formats for electronic documents/messages to maintain a "look and feel" of a biller's non-electronic messages) could have prompted variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces, and the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2143, Rational (F).

Dominguez also does not disclose the following elements:

- one or more billing personnel responsible for bills; and
- reporting the information identifying the billing personnel to the biller when reporting authorization results.

However, Mersky teaches a method and apparatus (i.e. system) for facilitating customer payments to creditors from a remote site, where transaction files include a plurality of records, with each having information pertaining to a particular transaction. Mersky teaches that the information includes an agent number (column 9, lines 50-67).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Mersky within Byrne for the motivation of creating reports of the daily transactions, for each creditor (e.g. biller), that include all details for each transaction, including the agent responsible for enter the payment into the system (col. 10, lines 1-67).

As to claim 19, Dominguez discloses a method of authorizing one or more bill payments, the method comprising:

- receiving, at an authorization system that includes at least one computer, information entered by a consumer and sent by a biller through the worldwide web (¶0059-0060, ¶0067-0068 and Figs. 1 and 4; discusses and illustrates a cardholder, a transaction, a merchant and a process for authorizing the transaction), wherein the information identifies:
 - the consumer (¶0050; via cardholder name),
 - an amount to be paid (¶0066; via payment amount),

- an account to be used to make a payment by the consumer to the biller for a bill provided by the biller to the consumer (¶0033, ¶0059-0060, ¶0066-0067 and ¶0072; which teaches a cardholder shopping online, adding items to a shopping cart, proceeding to the online merchant's checkout page, and completes the online merchants checkout forms, and then clicks on a "buy" button [this implicitly teaches the cardholder is presented with an itemized bill/invoice]; in addition to teaching using the account associate with the card);
- determining whether the payment should be authorized (¶0068; via the issuer financial institution will either authorize or decline the transaction);
- transmitting, by the at least one computer, through the worldwide web to a website of the biller, authorization information including whether to authorize the payment or refuse authorization of the payment (¶0068; via the issuer then returns the authorization response via the payment network to the merchant);
- determining a correctness of the verification code of a credit card or debit card used in the payment (¶0053 and ¶0068; via verifying the Cardholder Verification Value 2 (CVV2));
- assigning an identification number for each transaction for the biller (¶0068 and ¶0103; via the payment response message contains a card authorization verification value (CAVV), to inform the merchant that the cardholder has been authenticated); and

- transmitting the identification number to the biller (§0103).

Dominguez discloses that the cardholder's account information includes the cardholder e-mail addresses; however Dominguez does not explicitly disclose the limitation:

- sending, by the authorization system, an e-mail to the payor that the payment has been authorized.

However, Putta teaches a system and method for facilitating access to financial instruments such as credit and debit card accounts, checking accounts, bank accounts and the like. Putta teaches the use of an authorization module that receives payment requests for authorization from merchants, based on a customer deciding to make a payment. Putta also teaches that if the customer preferences (i.e. user-modifiable preference conditions for their account) indicated that the customer should be notified upon a successful authorization, the customer is notified through notification interface 400; and notification can be communicated to the customer via a communication media such as electronic mail. [See §0022, §0049, §0054-0061, §0095, §0123 and Figs. 1-2 and 6].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Putta within Dominguez for the motivation to provide flexible methods of processing transactions and payments based on existing credit card processing infrastructure while requiring minimal changes (§0021).

In addition, Dominguez teaches systems and methods for authenticating the identity of account holders during online transactions, in which, an authentication service allows a card issuer to verify a cardholder's identity using a variety of authentication methods, such as the use of passwords (Abstract and ¶0002). And Putta teaches methods and apparatus for processing transactions of financial instruments such as credit cards, and more specifically for improving the security, flexibility and privacy of such transactions (¶0002).

Therefore, it also would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include in the online account authentication service as taught by Dominguez, the notification methods as taught by Putta, since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (A).

Dominguez discloses that the merchant may send an order confirmation message to the cardholder's browser; however, Dominguez does not disclose the following element:

- wherein the authorization information is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format (e.g. logos, font characteristics, etc) specified by the biller; and
- wherein the e-mail is formatted in a predefined format (e.g. logos, font characteristics, etc) and presented as originating from the biller.

However, Kolling teaches an electronic statement presentment (ESP) system that replaces the preparation and mailing of paper statements and invoices from a biller with electronic delivery. Electronic statements have the same look as paper statements as well as including video, audio, graphics, and custom enclosures. Kolling teaches the use of templates in generating an electronic statement containing any information, format or logo that the biller desires to send to the consumer. This allows a biller to continue using a similar format and style such as is presented on paper statements to maintain the same "look and feel" for the consumer (Abstract; col.4, lines 15-29; col.6, lines 1-24; col.16, line 45 thru col.17, line 67; and col. 19, lines 7-13).

Dominguez teaches a method that includes transmitting authorization information and Putta teaches methods for transmitting notifications. Both types of communication (i.e. authorization or notification) would require electronic messages to be formatted based on some pre-defined scheme. Kolling teaches a method in which an electronic message can be formatted based upon a format desired by the biller.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use templates for customizing the format of electronic messages based on a biller's pre-defined scheme as taught by Kolling, since the claimed invention is simply a substitution of one known element for another (i.e. formatting a notification and/or an authorization vs. formatting a statement), and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the substitution would be predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (B).

In addition, the known work in the field of bill distribution/payments (e.g. customized formats for electronic documents/messages to maintain a “look and feel” of a biller’s non-electronic messages) could have prompted variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces, and the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2143, Rational (F).

Dominguez also does not disclose the following elements:

- determining an identify of billing personnel responsible for bills; and
- reporting to the biller an identity of the billing personnel with an authorization result.

However, Mersky teaches a method and apparatus (i.e. system) for facilitating customer payments to creditors from a remote site, where transaction files include a plurality of records, with each having information pertaining to a particular transaction. Mersky teaches that the information includes an agent number (column 9, lines 50-67).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Mersky within Byrne for the motivation of creating reports of the daily transactions, for each creditor (e.g. biller), that include all details for each transaction, including the agent responsible for enter the payment into the system (column 10, lines 1-67).

14. Claims 20 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, in view of Kolling and Cook et al., Pat. No. 6,675,153 (hereinafter "Cook").

As to claim 20, Dominguez discloses a system for authorizing one or more bill payments, the system comprising:

- an authorization web server programmed for selective communication through a network with a plurality of billers' web servers (§0035-0037 and Fig. 1; via issuer's authorization & settlement system);
- a programmed digital computer system linked to the authorization web server to obtain authorization information from a financial institution authorizing or rejecting a payment request received at a particular one of the billers' web servers from a payor's computer through the network, and to communicate authorization information to the particular biller's web server by the use of web services programming (§0032-0043 and Figs. 1, 4, 6 and 10A; discusses and illustrates the centralized and distributed architectures of the online account authentication service);
- wherein the payment request is for a payment by the payor to the particular biller for a bill from the particular biller to the payor (§0033, §0059-0060 and §0072; which teaches a cardholder shopping online, adding items to a shopping cart, proceeding to the online merchant's checkout page, and completes the online merchants checkout forms, and

then clicks on a "buy" button [this implicitly teaches that the cardholder is present with an itemized bill/invoice]);

- the programmed digital computer system being programmed to edit information (i.e. checking for the presence of various parameters; per pgs. 10-11 of specification) relating to the payment request received at the particular biller's web server from the payor's computer through the network (§0065-0068; discusses verifying transaction information, such as a digital signature used to sign the payment receipt).

Dominguez does not disclose the following element:

- the programmed digital computer system being programmed to send, directly to the payor's computer originating the payment request, an e-mail containing the authorization information.

Cook teaches a method for electronic transaction authorization over a network in which a payment authorization system processes transactions between consumers (e.g. member 110) and merchants (col. 1, lines 9-11; and col. 10, line 66 thru col. 12, line 40). Cook also teaches that transaction authorization information is sent by secure E-mail to the consumer (col. 12, lines 38-40).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Cook within Dominguez for the motivation to provide a method that allows consumers to authorize transactions in a secure, private, and convenient manner for the purchase of goods and services over the Internet (col. 3, lines 16-26).

Dominguez also does not disclose the following elements:

- wherein the authorization information is formatted to appear as originating from the particular biller and in a predefined format specified by the particular biller;
- wherein said e-mail is formatted in a predefined format specified by the particular biller such that the e-mail appears to be generated by the particular biller.

However, Kolling teaches an electronic statement presentment (ESP) system that replaces the preparation and mailing of paper statements and invoices from a biller with electronic delivery. Electronic statements have the same look as paper statements as well as including video, audio, graphics, and custom enclosures. Kolling teaches the use of templates in generating an electronic statement containing any information, format or logo that the biller desires to send to the consumer. This allows a biller to continue using a similar format and style such as is presented on paper statements to maintain the same "look and feel" for the consumer (Abstract; col.4, lines 15-29; col.6, lines 1-24; col.16, line 45 thru col.17, line 67; and col. 19, lines 7-13).

Dominguez teaches a method that includes transmitting authorization information and Cook teaches methods for transmitting notifications. Both types of communication (i.e. authorization or notification) would require electronic messages to be formatted based on some pre-defined scheme. Kolling teaches a method in which an electronic message can be formatted based upon a format desired by the biller.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to use templates for customizing the format of electronic messages based on a biller's pre-defined scheme as taught by Kolling, since the claimed invention is simply a substitution of one known element for another (i.e. formatting a notification and/or an authorization vs. formatting a statement), and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the substitution would be predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (B).

In addition, the known work in the field of bill distribution/payments (e.g. customized formats for electronic documents/messages to maintain a "look and feel" of a biller's non-electronic messages) could have prompted variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces, and the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2143, Rational (F).

As to claim 24, Dominguez discloses the following limitation:

- wherein the computer system is programmed to demand that credit card or debit card verification codes be submitted with any credit card or debit card payment requests, and to use the verification codes with other credit card information to protect against fraud in obtaining authorization for card payments (¶0053).

15. Claims 21-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, Kolling and Cook as applied to claim 20 above, and further in view of Byrne.

As to claims 21-22, neither Dominguez, Kolling nor Cook discloses or teaches the following limitations; however, Byrne teaches the limitations:

- wherein said authorization information is sent to the payor's computer and the particular biller's web server substantially simultaneously (§0107; via complex schema that contains the URL to post transaction response information back to the merchant and for sending confirmation e-mails); and
- wherein information regarding a format desired for communications to the payor on behalf of the particular biller is stored and retrieved to format the e-mail sent to the payor in the format desired by the particular biller (§0092-0093 and Table 1).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Byrne within the combination of Dominguez, Kolling and Cook for the motivation to provide a payment platform that can incorporate new technologies to provide a secure, reliable and flexible payment transaction processing solution for financial organizations and the sellers that they serve to reduce risk and improve profitability for those financial organizations that adopt it (§0009).

16. Claims 23 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, Cook and Kolling as applied to claim 20 above, and further in view of Mersky.

As to claims 23 and 25, neither Dominguez, Kolling nor Cook discloses or teaches the following limitations:

- wherein the computer system is programmed to apply a transaction number to each transaction for the particular biller, store the transaction numbers, and report the transaction numbers to the particular biller; and
- wherein the computer system is programmed to receive, store, and report to each biller an identity of billing personnel responsible for obtaining authorized payment.

However, Mersky teaches a method and apparatus (i.e. system) for facilitating customer payments to creditors from a remote site, where each transaction is assigned an identification number and for transactions involving an agent (i.e. billing personnel); the agent number is included in the transaction record, which is stored in a database. Mersky also teaches that the information related to each transaction is communicated to the biller (e.g. creditor; column 9, line 33 thru column 10, line 67; and column 12, lines 10-12). Mersky also teaches that the system receives, stores and reports to each biller (e.g. creditor) the identity of the billing personnel (e.g. agent) responsible for obtaining the payment authorized (column 9, line 33 thru column 10, line 67; and column 12, lines 10-12).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Mersky within the combination of Dominguez, Kolling and Cook for the motivation of creating and storing records for each transaction, of each creditor (e.g. biller), where the records contain a plurality details on the particular transaction (col. 9, line 33-67).

17. Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dominguez, Putta, Kolling and Mersky as applied to claim 19 above, and further in view of Byrne.

As to claim 30, neither Dominguez, Putta, Kolling nor Mersky discloses or teaches the following limitation; however, Byrne teaches the limitation:

- first pre-authorizing a given customer and a given credit card or debit card based on cardholder information (§0045); and sending information of the pre-authorization to the biller prior to receipt of a specific request for authorization of a specific payment charged to the given credit card or the debit card so as to allow the biller to determine a validity of the given credit card or the debit card prior to proceeding with a transaction (§0045).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include the aforementioned limitation as taught by Byrne within Dominguez for the motivation to provide a payment platform that can incorporate new technologies to provide a secure, reliable and flexible payment transaction processing

solution for financial organizations and the sellers that they serve to reduce risk and improve profitability for those financial organizations that adopt it (§0009).

Response to Arguments

18. Applicant's arguments filed September 27, 2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's arguments (pgs. 15—8), with regards to claim 1, are specifically directed to the following limitations:

- transmitting, by the at least one computer through the network to a website of the biller, authorization information including whether to authorize the payment or refuse authorization of the payment,
- wherein the authorization information is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format specified by the biller; and
- sending, from the authorization system, an electronic notification directly to the consumer that the payment has been authorized, in response to determining that the payment is authorized,
- wherein the electronic notification is formatted to appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format specified by the biller.

Applicant argues (pg. 16) that “Sending the electronic statement 224 to the consumer 140 as shown in Fig. 3 of Kolling is tantamount to sending a bill to a consumer, and clearly does not constitute *sending authorization information including*

whether to authorize the payment or refuse authorization of the payment, and also clearly does not provide any hint of *transmitting authorization information* to a website of the biller. In addition to (pg. 18), arguing that “it is clear that Kolling relates to sending of an electronic statement (in place of a paper statement), which has absolutely nothing to do with sending authorization information, as claimed.”

In response: The Office action clearly recites Putta as teaching the “*sending authorization information including whether to authorize the payment or refuse authorization of the payment*” and Dominguez as teaching “*transmitting authorization information.*” The Kolling reference was used for teaching the formatting of electronic messages sent by a third party to the customers of a biller, on behalf of the biller, and maintaining the “look and feel” of the biller. Because Kolling does not teach the “sending of authorization information” or the “transmitting authorization information”; this would make Kolling nonanalogous art.

It has been held that a prior art reference must either be in the field of Applicant’s endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the Applicant was concerned with, in order to be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention. See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ2d 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the particular problem/issue is maintaining the look (e.g. logo, etc) of the biller when electronic messages/documents are communicated to customers of the biller by a third party.

Kolling teaches a solution to this problem/issue by having the third party use a template containing static information of (e.g. format, layout, logo, phone numbers, etc)

to generate electronic statements containing both said static information with dynamic information. Whether the generated electronic documents are called statements or messages, the formatting process remains the same. Applicant describes the result of formatting electronic messages as to “appear as originating from the biller and in a predefined format specified by the biller.” Kolling describes the formatting as to “maintain the same “look and feel” for the consumer” via using a template with biller defined static information.

Therefore, Kolling can be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention because Kolling teaches a solution to the particular problem that Applicant was concerned with.

The Examiner maintains that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant’s invention to use templates for customizing the format of electronic messages based on a biller’s pre-defined scheme as taught by Kolling, since the claimed invention is simply a substitution of one known element for another (i.e. formatting a notification and/or an authorization based on a format desired by a biller vs. formatting a statement with a format desired by a biller), and one of ordinary skill in that art would have recognized that the results of the substitution would be predictable. See MPEP 2143, Rational (B).

In addition, the known work in the field of bill distribution/payments (such as customized formats for electronic documents/messages to maintain a “look and feel” of forms used by a biller in communicating with its customers) could have prompted variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design

incentives or other market forces, and the variations would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2143, Rational (F).

Applicant has similar arguments directed to claims 13-16 and 18-20.

In response: See Examiner's responses directed to claim 1 above.

Conclusion

19. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to GREGORY JOHNSON whose telephone number is (571)272-2025. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:30AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, ALEXANDER KALINOWSKI can be reached on (571) 272-6771. The fax

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phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Alexander Kalinowski/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3691

GREGORY JOHNSON
Examiner, Art Unit 3691
